

SOME ASSURANCES *of* IMMORTALITY

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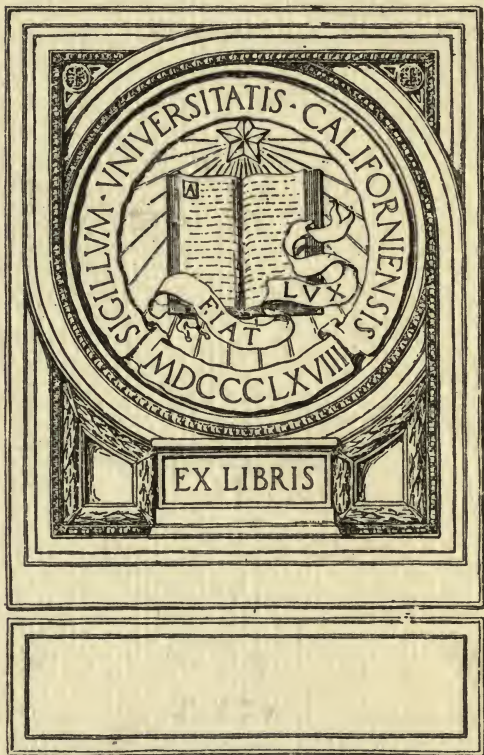
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JOHN B. N. BERRY

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Some Assurances
of
Immortality

By John B. N. Berry
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Immortality

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Some Assurances of Immortality.

WHO AND WHAT IS GOD?

All men accede to the proposition that there must have been a first cause, but many deny that personality was a concomitant of the first cause. Some take an agnostic position; not a few have some conception of God, but refuse to wrap Him up in a word or superinscribe him with anything likened unto an anthropomorphic form.

Before we should formulate an opinion, or reach a conclusion, we must have a concept of the subject and work out the proposition to its logical conclusion. In facing this question of the first cause, as both judge and jury, we must decide for ourselves alone the verdict that is to make us heirs of immortality, or the flotsam and jetsam of matter and chance.

10 *Some Assurances of Immortality*

Whilst some of the old biblical characters state they had seen God:—Jacob,—“I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved:” Isaiah,—“For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts,” yet St. John says, “No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him”: and Christ, talking to Philip, when Philip said unto him,—“Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us,” answered,—“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,” thus epitomizing all we have that is authentically given us concerning the personality of God,—for I propose to demonstrate the first cause to be God,—a personage.

Our mental unfolding will not admit of adoration and submission to a vague attenuation of an all-pervading essence; it is too ungraspable for our powers; less concrete than the most diaphanous of our hallucinations! We must have Infinite Power, Absolute Mind, All Pervading Influence to win the surrender of our wills, the abnegation of all that the human suggests, so as to be in accord with the God-voice within us.

It is more rational, indeed, it is easier to be-

lieve in a personal God than to give sanction to any such idea as—all things are but the product of—nothing. The mind that postulates thus may be said to be awry with presumptuousness. Though we may not know, with a *know-ledge* that is demonstrable, yet we can know with an understanding as sure to us as anything we must accept because of its logical deducement.

Agnosticism is stupidity, in its final analysis; and stupidity separates us from all that uplifts and ennobles. Decision for or against, on one side or another, we must make, if we would fulfil the law of our being; otherwise we are a species of human vacuum—abhorred by nature.

Deny God if we choose! for being a free agent that is our prerogative! But no rational creature wishes to deny God from pure contrarieness. It is because of the lack of mental illumination—of spiritual discernment—that the mind does not find its bent in contemplating the higher and more ennobling things of life. Yet, sooner or later, we must approach the end,—our thoughts must turn to the beyond, and God obtrudes. 'Tis then we want our question answered—Who and What is God?

If He is only an all-pervading spirit, or es-

sence, we are not drawn to the Heavens, death has not lost its horrors; but if God is our Heavenly Father, a personal intelligence, then we can give ourselves to Him, trust to His love, and accept Christ as our Saviour; for we are then bound to Him by our Soul's intelligence and yearnings.

How important then is it to have this question of the personality of God determined in our minds, so that our doubts and fears may be hushed and we be brought in harmony with Him, to the end that we may be developed spiritually to be worthy of that eternal life promised by the Saviour to all who have faith in, and confess Him before men!

To know God is so easy—it is appalling that we know Him to such a limited degree, in such a vague sense!

If we are ignorant of our mathematics, we can never be sure of our sums; understand it, and we will work out the right answer to our arithmetical problem without fear of contradiction. So understand God and our doubts vanish, and we will be able to abide in faith and trust, through all the involved scientific specu-

lations that may be offered to perplex and annoy our minds and souls.

Apart from the assurances given us by the one altogether perfect Being—that there is a place called Heaven, a creator, God;—who is our Father; that He has numbered the hairs of our heads, and loves us, careth for us,—assurances that cannot and should not be gainsaid by any man, no matter what his mental illumination may be (so long as Christ is not proven the blasphemer the Jews asserted Him to be,)—we can have the supplementing endorsement of our own intelligence, an endorsement we realize as a prime factor in all our acts! if we but just see the reasonableness, the simplicity of the logic which proves conclusively there is—must, indeed be—a personal God.

When we behold the earth, and the planets of space, we know beyond peradventure that this earth and these planets strewn our horizon, are real, not imagined. As we contemplate we realize that this earth and these planets are the effect of some cause. Again, we understand that the cause producing this earth and the planets about us, is, in itself, but an effect of some

other cause; and thus, to oblige the evolutionists, we get back to the primal cause, where all are agreed. To conceive this primal cause to be God,—and a personal God,—let us view this earth and these planets, for another purpose.

We know—as well as we can know anything—that these are governed by laws, for some of these laws are partially comprehended by us. This granted,—and who will doubt it?—how can we suppose law without presupposing intelligence? or supposing intelligence without presupposing personality?

This earth—and all upon it; the planets circling in space, had a cause, of which these are but the effect: and this first cause—the Creator—we can understand, as readily as we can that two and two make four, is God; and this God must have personality because He is intelligence, and there is no intelligence apart from personality.

The first cause—God, our Father in Heaven, without beginning, Omniscient—Omnipotent—Omnipresent, because He is infinite, gives us eternal life—if we trust and love Him, by giving our faith to His only begotten Son.

WHERE IS THE SOUL?

The lexicographic definition of the soul is the spiritual, rational and immortal substance in man, which distinguishes him from brutes; that part which enables him to think and reason, and which renders him a subject of moral government. But where is the soul located? Is it a "substance?" as the definition states, and how does it render man a subject of moral government?

We hear the word spoken without any thought to grasp its true significance, simply taking it to mean that part of our entity which alone survives the dissolution of the corporeal by the processes inaugurated by death.

We do not know where the soul is located, nor of what it is composed; but that we possess the element we call the soul most men of all types and climes accede to.

If we possess this soul, how can we reconcile this fact with the other fact that no man ever

has seen it? All other parts of the human have been laid bare by the scalpel, made evident by the senses, demonstrated by the faculties, but this soul of ours escapes our senses and faculties, since it has neither form, visibility, or palpability. The subtle emanations of flowers we perceive; the indefinable charm of beauty so impinges upon our susceptibility that we are swayed by it; the potency of melody thrills us; all these subtleties are within the boundaries of our understanding, but the soul escapes all our powers to grasp its nature or comprehend its character. The infinitesimal infusoria, numbers of which will scarcely cover the point of a pin, each with shell of beautiful and varying form; the tiny drop of water, a world of animal existence, man explores and demonstrates; nothing material, seemingly, is beyond the grasp of his powers to apprehend, and, to a degree, comprehend; but before the soul man can only stand mute and yield his recognition through faith.

It is that something which is the vital force, the living principle, cognizable in our thoughts, but eluding the definiteness of expression. It is not breath or breathing, for we know the

dynamics of this function; it is a something in us, writ large in our inner consciousness; something altogether august in us, realized by our superconsciousness through the potency exercised upon us by the inner self; an essence of our being as is the fragrance to the flower or the flavor to the fruit; a something that dominates us and is beyond the power of analysis, superior to our purely human self, the fragrance and flavor of our nature.

As we can know nothing other than we have experienced, so the accumulated experiences we gain of a something subtly-subtile existing in us, tends to confirm us in the knowledge of a power emanating from our subtile-self that is more than and superior to, the purely human.

The soul if having its seat in the mind, may be the medium through which we are made cognizable of and amenable to the immutable laws of God. The mind, the will, is the arbiter of our lives, for thoughts and desires, the creations of the mind, are capable of making us pure, true, good, or impure and hurtful. If our thoughts, creations, desires are pure, true, good, then just as we strive to keep them so, this subtile power within us advances them higher

and makes us better, adding so much more of an exquisite sense of happiness that we have a realization of a higher existence. If the mind forms impure, hurtful thoughts, there is evidence, esoteric as well as exoteric, that "adder's poison is under our lips."

Another element of the soul's existence is what we know as conscience, the voice of the soul, the judge of our thoughts, words, deeds—God's voice within us.

less, indeed, he be attuned to those spiritual vortex waves which ever and anon draw our thoughts God-ward. One has to be of exceedingly fine fiber to be able to realize the delicate cords the infinite fingers play upon in making celestial music in our discordant human natures, though sometimes we do find a rare nature attuned to the purposes of the Deity, even though rudely incased. But such is the stubborn self-assertiveness of the purely human, comprehension is difficult of those more delicate whisperings from heavenly spheres.

These rare souls of earth sometimes catch melodies duller ears are sealed to; and even to the duller ears, at times, the chimes of heaven are faintly heard, demonstrating that there is within us a higher self that perceives things unknowable to our normal self.

No mortal mind ever conceived of a thing non-existent. It is not an attribute of the finite to create. The best we can do is to be so responsive to the influences emanating from the Infinite as to place ourselves in harmony therewith and give forth as reflective evidence, the swayings of our inner subtler self. Radium existed from the beginning, but only one found

it, and that after thousands of years had elapsed; and though but few of us have seen it, and very few of the few who have seen it are able to comprehend it, none now may deny its existence. The mind of man is so cramped it expands slowly, but it is absorbent and takes up that which has been proven is.

To state the proposition that a bit of substance, one quarter of an inch square, will fill a space 16 feet by 16 feet by 10 feet, equivalent to 4,423,680 cubic inches, without diminishing itself, would be denied by those of more than the average intelligence; yet, if illustrated or explained by the bit of musk maintaining its bulk while filling the space with its particles, the problem is grasped, comprehended, accepted. So, if we but realize that no mortal mind could have originated the idea of the spirit's return to its former earthly habitation, we begin to understand that the many evidences vouchsafed us must be based upon an infinite principle, that will become cognizable to us if we contemplate the spirit power as we do the subtler emanations from mere material things.

In the average man may be reflections of the likeness of God. The more he considers the

higher nature he perceives is within him, the truer reflection will he gain from the mirror of his soul, of that higher and truer self that is God-given, and the more this introspection is cultivated the more readily will he perceive of the things which before were but as objects to the blind.

The evidences of the spirit's return have been sufficiently shown to prove that it cannot be blotted from the records by the refusal to accept it by those who do not care enough about it to give it their meditations and investigations.

If the question is sincerely studied it may become a Jacob's ladder, stretching to Heaven, by means of which we may approach the realms now hidden from our ken.

That we may have unto ourselves the more visual communion with the realms of the post-mortal state, we must understand, as far as knowledge can be obtained, the philosophy as well as the science concerning the spirits of those who were on earth, if the comforting solace of a belief in spirit nature is to be ours.

While we may not know, we can gain a belief that will be the vestibule of knowledge.

The mind, looking back into the inexplorable vastness of the past, or upward or forward to the unimaginable extent and unfathomableness of eternity, when it takes in the spaces of the universe, the innumerable worlds which are dispersed in every direction through the immeasurable tracts of creation, and consider that our existence "may run parallel with interminable ages," and that in the revolutions of eternity we may exist in regions of space inconceivably distant from our present habitation, associate with orders of intelligible beings, and pass through new scenes and changes in distant worlds, should we believe these mental conceptions are but products of our limited faculties, or that they come to us as unfoldings of Omnipotence, through the comprehension of and harmony with some of His laws! The beginning of time is beyond the power of our imagination to conceive of, though we can project our thoughts from earth to the sun, and comprehend that it is equal to thirteen hundred thousands of the size of the earth. We can look at the planet Jupiter, 490,000,000 miles distant; then to Saturn, 900,000,000 miles away, and yet have but a faint conception of the extent of creation

or how numerous the worlds which exist within the limitless range; still less can we conceive of the power and intelligence of that Being who called all these things from nothing into existence.

The contemplation of these mighty works of Omnipotence convinces us of the infinite source of varied felicity which He has in His power to communicate to body-intelligences, to enliven our hopes of splendors of that "exceeding great and eternal weight of glory" which will burst upon spirits of good men when they pass to regions of immortality; and induce us to aspire, with a more lively ardor, after that heavenly world "where glories of the Deity and the magnificence of His works will be more clearly unfolded."

Astronomy tells us that the space which surrounds the utmost limit of our system, extending in every direction to the nearest fixed star, is at least 40,000,000,000,000 miles in diameter; and it is highly probable that every star is surrounded by space of equal extent; that bodies of such prodigious distances exert a mutual influence on one another; the moon, at a distance of 240,000 miles, raises tides in the oceans of

the earth and air currents in the atmosphere; the sun, at a distance of 95,000,000 miles, raises the vapors, moves the oceans, directs the course of the winds, fructifies the earth, distributes light, heat, and color through every region of the globe. Is it thinkable that such manifestations of the Deity are irrelevant to the eternal welfare of man?

Reason, conscience, will, the powers of the soul, constitute the spiritual nature of man, enabling him to choose and resolve and make of him a responsible being, amenable to the immutable laws.

Matter is made up of parts; it is capable, from its nature, of being decomposed and dissolved. But decomposition and dissolution are not destruction. If destructibility does not follow divisibility in matter, can we assume destructibility in the case of mind?

Self-action and self-government of mind exalt it immeasurably above unconscious matter. Its intellectual, and especially its moral powers, its almost unlimited capacities, and its lofty aspirations, create a strong presumption that it is formed for a higher destiny than unconscious matter.

SPIRITISM.

Do spirits return after the death of the human, or are the various manifestations of materializations but shams and delusions? are questions we cannot exclude from consideration, no matter what our doctrinal belief may be; and notwithstanding the many years so-called spirit manifestations have been before the public in the character of exhibitions for gain, the inquiring mind of the seeker for basic truths is as much in quandary as ever, because so involved have been the manifestations, seemingly clean and genuine, with those that OBVIOUSLY WERE THE PRODUCT OF CHARLATANISM.

The question has claimed the attention and received the thought of profound minds, and many volumes have been written, pro and con, on the subject, with but little of a determining character.

After the Psychological Research Society of England had pronounced the various and

strange manifestations of Dr. Slade, tricks and frauds, and for which he was convicted and imprisoned on the charge of obtaining money under false pretenses, Zoellner, in his *Transcendental Physics*, staked his professional reputation as an intelligent and honorable man, upon his statement that Dr. Slade, did not perpetrate any fraud when he wrought the SAME MANIFESTATIONS before Von Hoffman, Weber and himself, and could only attribute these phenomena to the powers of a fourth dimension.

Florence Marryat, in "There Is No Death," seemingly proves by the many manifestations of materializations chronicled in that book, that such a sincere and intelligent investigator could not be gainsaid in her conclusion that spirits of the departed can and do return to earth and manifest themselves; whilst Mr. Truesdale, a citizen of Syracuse, N. Y., in his book, "Bottom Facts," describing the various wonderful manifestations he had often mystified audiences with, showed the methods by which the tricks were performed, placing them on no higher level than the manipulations of the magician.

There have been some evidences of spirit in-

fluence, or manifestations, and of materializations, that have occurred in my presence, and under my scrutiny, that left no doubt in my mind that there were no tricks of any character employed; that they were as impossible of detection as were Dr. Slade's manifestations before Zoellner, Von Hoffman and Weber; and if caused by human powers or talent, must be ascribed to a fourth dimension, or a fourth state of matter.

Many of the seances were of the commonplace character, **TOO OBVIOUSLY FRAUDS**; but there were others that transcended all my powers to ascribe them to any other domain of cause than that of spirit made visible, audible, and palpable; one in particular stands out so conspicuously that it hushes all inclination to question its verity.

An acquaintance whose mind was of that quality that he was recognized as well equipped by study and experience to reach conclusions entitled to consideration, was so pronounced, and seemingly so sincere in his belief that the spirits of the departed return, that he regularly attended circles where the spirit of his little daughter—who departed this life in childhood

—manifested herself in a materialized form. So solicitous was he that I test the matter for myself, that I called at a house where seances were held, arriving something like an hour before the time set for the commencement of the entertainmmt, so as to carefully examine the room and furniture. The meeting-place was a plainly furnished parlor, in an old-fashioned dwelling, in a locality that was in its transition state between its former desirableness as a residential section of the better class, and the beginning of a cheap tradesman's and transient boarding business. In the front part of the room were two windows; on the side, a door leading to the hall, and a door in the rear; a tête in the corner between the door leading to the hall and the front windows; a table in the centre of the room, just under the chandelier; about a dozen chairs; and across the left-hand corner, in the rear part of the room, a portiere was stretched, making a triangular enclosure, the hypotenuse formed by the drapery. There was no opening of any kind behind the portiere; the carpet covering the floor was tacked down. So far as my careful scrutiny enabled me to determine, I was convinced that there was noth-

ing which could be availed of to facilitate in the commission of tricks, fraud or delusion.

After an interval of some twenty minutes people commenced to drop in, and when nine persons were assembled, the medium requested all to be seated, the chairs having been arranged in a semi-circle within a few feet of the triangle formed by the corner of the room and the curtain. The gas was turned to a taper, but everything in and about the room was clearly distinguishable.

The medium seated herself on a camp-stool just outside the curtained-off space. She explained that semi-darkness was necessary inasmuch as spirits had not power to become manifest in the light, and that music was requisite, to enable the spirits to gather strength for materialization; and to that end all were requested to sing hymns. "Rock of Ages," "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and other well known hymns were sung, all in a subdued tone awkwardly rendered. Soon a deep, stentorian voice cried out, "Come inside!" This, the medium stated, was the spirit of a Mr. Severance, her control. She went behind this curtain, and in a few moments there appeared a globule of light just where the

portiere was drawn aside. It moved slightly up and down, from side to side, then forward, expanding the while, until it had assumed form and shape, floating out to the circle, and around, until it was cognizable to every one present; the human lineaments being clearly defined and flushed as if with life.

Some one in the circle inquired, "Whom do you wish to communicate with?" and the spirit answered, giving the name correctly, continuing to float, not walk, until in front of the person whose name was spoken. The party, whose name the spirit had uttered, asked:

"What is your name?"

"Nina Willis!" was the answer.

"Nina, your father told me you died when you were a child; now you appear a young woman!"

"Yes! We grow in the spirit land."

"What are all those lights in the quilling of your gown?" for she, or this manifestation of her spirit, wore a gown of a material like cheese-cloth, the bosom gathered in diamond shapes; in the center of each glowed and shimmered opalescent lights, like unto the flashings of the fire-

fly, though the lights were continuous, not intermittent.

"Yes!" was spoken, the face downward bent, so that the eyes, luminous and liquid in their expression, could see them:—"They are beautiful, but look at my hair," the while turning her head, throwing the mass to the front, each strand glistening and shimmering with lights as though it had liquid fire running through it. The hair, of a light color, and long, was veritably of the human kind in all its characteristics, save its iridescent luminosity.

"Tell me, Nina, if you are from the spirit world, how is it you are wearing a cotton gown, material of the earth?" the while taking hold of the long sleeve of the garment.

"You think you hold in your hand a material substance, and are holding me by it?"

"Yes! I think so."

"I will show you that I am a spirit, that my garment is not material, for I will disappear right before your eyes and at your feet."

Slowly, directly in front of me, whilst I was holding the sleeve of the garment, grasped tenaciously, and intently looking at the form before

me, Nina Willis, or this apparition, shrunk, faded, vanished, as the breath disappears from the mirror, and I held nothing in my hand.

Many such evidences of the phenomenon we call spiritism have I seen, and been unable to account for on any hypothesis other than that the spirits of the departed can and do reappear on earth, as this most intimate and personal exposition of the materialization of Nina Willis so convincingly assures.

Whilst human abilities are various and human judgments unreliable, no man's say-so may be accepted as beyond question, in cases of this character especially, for no matter how certain one may be in his opinion, based upon his knowledge and experience, there are many things which may be overlooked or be beyond his powers of analysis or synthesis, that may vitiate the conclusion reached; still science, because of the many strange and marvelous manifestations so inexplicable upon any theory other than they are what they are professed to be, has accepted the fact that enough has been demonstrated, in the materializations, to warrant investigation and definition, so as to formulate, in exact

terms, the theory of the visibility of the subtle thing we term the spirit of the departed human.

In the realms of science we have progressed sufficiently far to hush doubts as to things heretofore supposed impossible, so that we no longer question our ability to see through a brick wall. The cathode rays photograph and make visible the bones and organs of our bodies, whilst the "N" rays catch and display the pictures of our thoughts.

Wireless telegraphy is now accepted as a matter of course, but is it not quite as mysterious, even though comprehended somewhat, as Spiritism?

We know and understand some of the laws by means of which we can transmit messages hundreds of miles without wire or other mechanical channels, the fact being established, yet it may be stated that Spiritism can be as easily comprehended, though not now understood, if we suppose the same laws applicable to spirit return as to the sending and receiving of wireless messages.

When we speak the atmospheric waves are vibrated sixteen thousand times a second; and

in singing some sixty thousand times in a second, but in sending sparks from an electric oscillator the vibrations are sixty millions to the second. These electric vibrations pass through earth, water, over mountains, penetrating brick walls, overcoming all obstructions; and a simple contrivance, called a coherer or resonator, catches these messages, carried by these electric waves, exactly as started, and gives them up to us. Why, then, should it be considered incredible for spirits to manifest themselves, coming from spheres unknown, passing through the ether, and all opposings of a material character, becoming audible, palpable, visible to us!

Ether, as a substance, is so high in the scale of matter, that we cannot sense it, but Faraday enables us to gain some comprehension of it in his description of the fourth state of matter: "If we conceive a change as far beyond vaporization as that is above fluidity we shall perhaps not fall short of a conception of radiant matter. As we ascend from the solid to the fluid and gaseous states physical properties diminish in number and variety; therefore, if we could think of a matter as many times removed from radiant matter as the latter is from solids we

would have a substance almost as far beyond our analytical powers as ether itself."

Thus whilst the nature of ether is not really known, in a measure we understand the laws governing it, one of these laws being that ether vortex rings are absolute and constant, and when thus transformed cannot, by any method known to man, be destroyed. According to Plato, ether signifies perpetual motion.

If by Faraday's fourth state of matter, or Zoellner's fourth dimension, we are enabled to attribute these phenomena to laws as fixed and definite as those we operate by in the three dimensions, may we not, when we have acquired a better knowledge of the fourth dimension, be in a position to reach other worlds as readily as we now penetrate space, and use the ether as a medium by which to communicate with other planets?

By means of the oscillator, electric waves are projected that cannot be destroyed, and which possibly reach all planets; and it may not be overtaxing the imagination to suppose that with an adequate resonator we may catch the efforts at communication from distant planets and ultimately decipher them.

If again, by the powers of a fourth dimension, we may suspend the laws of impenetrability, disintegrate molecules and re-incorporate them by mere volition, may we not expect, at no distant time, to reach that state of development whereby through more adequately comprehended laws we may communicate with the spirits of those once upon earth and now dwellers in other realms?

The "X" and "N" rays and wireless telegraphy are marvelous, yet are now accepted as matters of course because of the endorsement of science, hence it is fair to suppose that it may not be long before the scientific investigations now going on may endorse the claims of spirit materialization, as true. But apart from this, a case in point may be cited from a source most men will be willing to yield acquiescence to, that may go very far in some minds to settle the belief as beyond questioning, independent of science, that the spirits of the departed humans can return and hold communion with us. "Then said Saul unto his servants, seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, 'Behold, there is a woman that hath a

familiar spirit at Endor.’ And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiments, and he went, and two men went with him, and they came to the woman by night, and he said, ‘I pray thee divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him whom I shall name unto thee.’

“Then said the woman, ‘Whom shall I bring up unto thee?’ And he said, ‘Bring me up Samuel.’ ”

The Bible makes it plain that the belief in the return of departed spirits is very ancient.

MATERIALIZATION.

Even among those accepting the tenets of Spiritism, materialization is doubted by many. This is because mediums as a rule do not submit to these tests which the fair-minded deem proper. The manifestations must be in semi-darkness and the materialized not touched—not tested by clear vision and feeling. The reasons given are:

“Light impairs the gathering of strength sufficient to take on form, and touch destroys the accreted molecules, and the entity of the spirit’s visibility is dissipated.”

This excuse may suffice for the credulous and unthinking; but to the serious, sincere and capable, it smacks too much of sophistry.

Even the capable and sincere who vouch for the fact of materialization having been demonstrated under their scrutiny the explanation is offered by the doubter that the subject was self-hypnotized; that he imagined seeing and hearing the things suggested by the medium.

The explanation at best is but a vague plausibility to those who have not witnessed the particular phenomenon detailed; but to the careful investigator, who has safeguarded against delusions, and who has seen and heard the various evidences of spirit manifestations, self-delusion or hypnotic suggestion cannot be acceded to as the solution of the enigma.

Were mediums above suspicion—the general run of mediums willing to submit to reasonable tests—then these doubts as to materialization would vanish, and the question be solved, either as a fact or a fiction, and a fraud.

If there has been one honest materialization then there can be others that will stand the closest scrutiny.

That there have been honest materializations, my experience justifies me in believing, notwithstanding the assertion, entirely gratuitous, that I was hypnotized, or by auto-suggestion, however that may be, self-deluded.

The experience related in the Chapter on Spiritism, warrants my acceptance of materialization as a fact, but another incident witnessed by me, supplements and substantiates this belief to such a degree that my faith is so merged

into knowledge that it cannot be displaced as a verity by the incredulity of those lacking my particular observations.

At a gathering held by the medium where the materialization detailed took place, I witnessed one quite as positive and assuring.

An elderly man, whose life had been a seafaring one, was a regular attendant, primarily to receive visits from his little grandson. This old man was of rugged constitution, hale, vigorous and mentally alert. His merriments and his strong voice gave evidence that senility had not placed its stamp upon bodily vigor or mentality.

The usual routine had been gone through with and several manifestations of materializations taken place, when was seen another of the nebulous formations at the parting of the curtains, gradually unfolding and enlarging, until a form of a little boy developed, apparently about seven years of age. The old Captain recognized his little grandchild, and called out, "Is that you Tommy?"

This body—characterize it any way you may—answered, "Yes, Grandpa," and started on a run the distance of fully ten feet and when

reaching his grandfather, he jumped into his lap and outstretched arms, the old man patting and hugging the lad, and kissing him with all the ardor we see displayed towards the actual physical being.

No one present doubted that this grandchild of the old captain was veritably present in bodily substantiality, and the old man's voice, tenderness and joy, evidenced his absolute faith in the actual presence, visible and palpable, of his grandchild.

Were the captain and the others of the audience hypnotized by the medium, or self-deluded by auto-suggestion, and none of them conscious of the change in themselves?

It is hardly thinkable. The little fellow, his voice heard by everyone in the circle, asked, "How is Mamma?" and the captain answering, "She is well." "Give my love to Mamma, and tell her I'm happy," said the spirit boy.

The captain asked Tommy if he had learned to ride his bicycle yet? (The inference from this inquiry being, that in some former materialization he had told his grandpa that he was trying to ride a bicycle.) The boy said, "I'll show you," leaping from the lap of the old gen-

tleman, and instantly he was seen circling around with such velocity that the many concentric circles appeared as one broad ribbon of hazy light, the speed gradually slowing down, and then they beheld him standing in the center of the circle, where he slowly diminished and vanished from sight.

On another occasion I have seen several materialized spirit-bodies at one time in the center of the circle, though the light was so dim they were of vapory indistinctness, each singing, some in alto, others in soprano, again others in tenor and base, evidencing their individuality in form and voice, and dematerializing in the presence of all.

If there were any trick or delusion here where the room had been examined most carefully, and absence of all paraphernalia noted, then this medium possessed a skill or an art that would have won her fame and fortune on a larger stage, for as far as it was possible for a careful examination of the room and furniture to disclose, it was simply out of the question for this woman to have made provision for the secreting of so many persons as assistants in her performances.

If I was deluded or deceived in any way; if there were any human agencies or tricks in these manifestations, then my attributes fail to impress me with any sense of self-delusion, swaying suggestions or questions of doubt.

These were the most perfect performances I ever witnessed; they were the most marvelous expositions of legerdemain, or they were the veritable materialization of departed spirits.

Until I have as visible palpable and assuring evidences given me that I was a victim of some hallucination, I must yield my belief to that assurance my sincere investigation urges that I beheld veritable materialization of the spirit of the departed human.

If, therefore, materialization is a fact, there should be means, methods, capabilities, to prove the matter beyond cavil, and if there are any sincere, honorable mediums holding the belief, then they should submit their manifestation to the careful scrutiny of the intelligent and earnest seeker for truth in order that Spiritism may be kept on the broad base of actuality, so that the testimony of many may be the answer to the critics who claim that Spiritism is but the thing that charlatans conjure with.

FAITH.

Faith!—"The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This is more rhetorical and epigrammatic than exact, for faith is real;—almost, in a sense, tangible and visible in its power. It is more than hope, for in it we place a trust, a reliance, that is not vague, indefinite or nebulous, but realized by our inner consciousness, or subtler self, as a *fact*.

The degree of development of our faith indicates the quality of our character in its spiritual evolvment:—the less defined the grosser our nature; the more dominant, the higher and truer is our abstraction from the things which contaminate.

Faith is not a blind yielding of our wills or our intelligence "to things hoped for—to things not seen," but an intelligent giving of our trust,—of our soul's and mind's acquiescence, to things *inter muros*,—beyond the ken of our hu-

man inspection. It is not an evidence of things not seen so much as a yielding of our belief in the assurance given by another.

There are several degrees and qualities of faith, each expressive of the varying phases of our trusts and judgments:—A faith in man or woman that impels our regard: that faith our minds yield to statements made to us, even when we are not drawn to the person making them; faith in a plan or enterprise; faith in the means employed, or that we surrender ourselves to: then that sublimest of all our faiths,—the *saving faith*.

All these meanings are embodied in the word Faith:—trust in the concrete; to draw, to bind, in its primitive signification.

There are three words, which supplement and amplify each other, that probably loom larger and mean more to us than any other three words in our language:—home—love—faith! These we use too perfunctorily, not realizing their great potency in the upbuilding of our character.

From the beginning of the mental unfolding and the first emotions manifested in infancy, the mother and babe are drawn and bound to

each other by love—faith: the truest and sweetest of human endowments. Again, this love—faith—assumes another form, that of ardor and admiration, causing the binding of our love and faith, for better, for worse, until death us do part. Another phase is when we trust ourselves, or our loved ones, to be transported out of our protection—away from our care. All these variations of faith appertain mostly to our relation with our fellow being, but the faith relating to the spiritual part of us—saving faith—sooner or later becomes the most consequential fact in life, since the life here, in its highest form, and the life that is to be hereafter, are predicated upon the degree or quality of our spiritual or saving faith.

Faith is a necessary concomitant of all our acts. In eating, drinking, sleeping or walking; in our dealings with our fellowmen, we must trust and rely upon—have faith in—things we have no control over; for each step we take, each act, is an evidence of our surrender to someone, to something, since we cannot *know* the results to be unfolded by the next instant.

We may have faith in, or we may doubt,—just as we are inclined or choose—concerning

the events, or of the lives of the personages portrayed in the annals of the past, for only the correctness of our reading, of our understanding, and of our opinions of the world's history, would be involved; but regarding that one unique personage—Christ, we are to be held accountable for the attitude we take concerning Him. We are bound, compelled, to accept Him for just what is historically stated as His words and acts, or, abide the consequences of our rejection of Him as the Saviour; for belief—faith—in Him—he makes the prerequisite for our eternal life.

To yield acquiescence, is faith,—a faith that has no variableness of meaning, but is, must be, absolute trust. He must be to us 'The way, the truth and the life,' or—we condemn him,—“Because ye have heard his blasphemy, considering himself equal with God.”

This faith in Christ must be a living—a soul, mind and heart—faith; not a mere word to convey a meaning of a state of trust; for upon this acceptance of Christ as the Messiah, as the one in whom we must believe, if we would have life eternal—depends all that this earth-life signifies.

When this saving faith is ours, not tentatively, conditionally, nebulously, but actually, then we are transformed, become a new creature, for we are bound—drawn—to the eternal one, and realize that now we “Shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” to guide us.

When we yield our mental consent to all that Christ claimed Himself to be,—*have faith in Him*, we gain a rest for our perturbed souls, the spiritual nature becomes illumined, until by this faith He is comprehended, and we realize “That whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

This saving faith is a transposing power!

To gain this faith it is not requisite to know science, philosophy or theology, nor to subscribe to creed or dogma, or perform ceremonials, only *have faith*;—trust implicitly in Christ, and strive to live *His* doctrines.

Each age adds something of and to religion, until this simple and sure foundation, love of God and faith in Christ, is too frequently subordinated to non-essentials, the grotesque excrescences of superstition, and the paraphernalia of ceremonialism. Dogmatic religion so cramps the intelligent and binds the ignorant, that the

tendency is to make us afraid of God; instead of trusting in Him as a loving Father,—of all wisdom, power and mercy;—our truer, higher, individuality, our spirit-nature, cowers before Him as an austere Deity.

Religion is losing its efficacy because faith is not the prime factor, but too frequently only an ancillary adjunct to an ism; to the end, that the benefits may the better accrue for the worldly good of the persons who claim to represent God. True worship is to live the life of Faith,—of trust in Christ; the spiritual comprehension of the imminence of God; and constant efforts to be in harmony with His immutable laws.

INTUITION AND CONSCIENCE.

Ralph Waldo Trine, concluding his definition of Intuition, states,—“Some call it the voice of the soul; some call it the voice of God. It is our inner spiritual sense.” This definition better applies to Conscience than to Intuition. Intuition is a swaying by inner impressions, whilst Conscience is the moral sense in us determining the right and wrong of our affections and conduct.

Intuition is as a sensitized plate receiving instantaneous impressions and showing us the subtle picture produced by thought, act or deed in their initiatory or concluded state, the more accurately to direct or aid in the forming of our judgments. It is the picket on the outpost of our acts and contacts, to warn us of the presence of antagonisms, whilst Conscience is the judge censuring us for our errors—sins. One is a forerunner, the other manifests its power only after the error or sin has been committed.

Intuition is auxiliary to judgment, but ancil-

lary to decision. Conscience inflicts anxiety, grief, sorrow for the error of judgment, for the sin of decision. By keeping our thoughts purged through concentration upon God and His immutable laws:—for thus the concupiscences are relegated to innocuousness,—we get into that state of harmony with the Infinite that will give our minds that delicate sensitization which will enable us to perceive antagonisms and help to direct us to right judgments. Elevated thought, pure-mindedness, act and react upon our natures, refining and spiritualizing us, until we are brought into closer relationship with God, and more and more reflect in our thoughts and desires, God's will and Christ's teachings. These inner faculties or principles are the spirit gauges or indicators which show man's slower and less accurate minds, the subtle influence unperceivable by the grosser senses; and if we watched more closely these gauges or indicators of the subtler spirit in us, relied less upon our conceits, yielded less to our human inclinations, fewer errors of judgment would result and we would escape much of the lashings Conscience inflicts upon us for our wrongdoings.

In the feminine we see this power of intuition implanted to a greater degree than in the masculine, and women rely upon it rather than upon reasoning for their judgments. This may be attributable to their more sensitive character, their more delicate natures, but, too, it is a compensation for the lack of the rude and enduring in their physical make-up.

The eternally right is more accurately regarded as the power is developed in us to seek after the things which be of Heaven rather than after the benefits of the world. Man too long has been directed in his spiritual evolvment, to the lanes and byways rather than to the high road of the soul's growth; the immaterial things appertaining to religion being made more prominent and emphasized more than the disclosure and cultivation of the God-nature in us, for it is the state of the mind, not the definition of theology which determines our relation to God.

The world, when the masses were ignorant, relied, indeed had to rely, upon teachers, and in the multiplicity of teachers there was diversity of doctrines, until the simple truths promulgated by Christ have become obscured by the pronunciamentos of ecclesiasticism.

These God implanted faculties are our guides, our admonishers, God's voice audible to our inner consciousness; and if we yield ourselves to the directings of these soul attributes we will receive the light of Heaven in our minds and have the power of God to aid us in our lives.

PRAYER.

Prayer in some form or other, is used by all peoples. It is a natural instinct peculiar to no clime, race or age. No matter how limited the understanding of, or belief in a Deity, Man prays. He may be indifferent in his worship of God, yet when he is forced to recognize his limitations, and is face to face with a dire necessity, his inner, higher self, cannot be held in check longer, and be his language what it may, a supplication for help breaks from his lips. Man must of a necessity pray, sometime, somehow! The *how* is the important thing.

Some pray only when keen distress topples over conceit and presumption, and helplessness and incapability to contend longer with adverse conditions becomes evident. Then and only out of the fear born of coward conscience, a plea for help is offered up.

Some pray that God will grant them special

blessings, that they may have from Him the things craved, but beyond their capacity to achieve, taking Christ's words,—“and all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive,” as their warrant.

Prayer is beneficial always, for it is an uplift of the soul to its source, but is answered only when our prayers are in harmony with the immutable laws of the Divine One.

If Christ's words meant just according to the letter—that “all things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive,” then, all we would have to do would be to ask—*believing* and *all things* we craved would be ours: and if such were answered the surer would be our believing. But out of our experience can we believe that God grants the prayers we put up to Him, for this and that specific thing? Have we so found it to be the case? There seems to be a deeper meaning to Christ's teachings. Christ, the day before, went into the temple of God, and cast out all there that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of those that sold doves, and he healed the blind and the lame; and on the following morning, as he returned into the

city, he hungered, and when he saw a fig tree and found nothing thereon but leaves only, he said—"Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever, and presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away." Jesus explains the lesson he thus impressed upon their minds,—“Verily I say unto you, If you have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if you shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” All power may have been given to the disciples, but it may be doubted, if *we* pray, believing, we can accomplish the removal of mountains by our faith, possibly because we do not have faith—do not believe—to that absolute unquestioning degree Christ illustrated.

It does not seem possible for us so to believe. God is not mutable in his resolves, but His laws are immutable, therefore are not to be changed by prayer; he does not suspend the execution of his resolves, alter and change his providential schemes because we in our ignorance cannot

know the import of what we ask. A fruitless fig tree: failure in its mission, it therefore must wither! That seems to be the lesson Christ emphasized.

If we would take our place in God's economy we must be fruitful,—fulfil our station and do our part acceptably. We must conform to God's laws, or perish.

For God to answer all sorts of prayers, because we ask, believing, would produce chaos. God makes his laws, and in order to be in harmony with them—therefore with God—we must *think, desire* and *do* according to them, and our prayers should be through Jesus for His guidance in all our desires and acts, that we may only desire and act according to the will of the Father, not for our wills, wishes and purposes to be granted unto us. All our cares, needs, burdens, difficulties, sins, should be carried to God—and with faith—believing—these, though they be as mountains, will be cast into the sea—for these mountains of sins can be removed by His divine grace operating in our lives.

Prayer so modifies the mind and regulates the course of our lives that we are thereby, according to our faith, the better enabled to avoid

making mistakes of a serious character, or transgressing His laws.

A man relying upon himself may be said to be presumptuous, dispensing with the need of God's aid, and though he may seemingly prosper the time comes when he finds himself in a blind alley, plump against a blank wall, with the alternative to retrace his steps—or perish.

God never mends his work. It is perfect from the beginning to the end. Man's prayers cannot change His will, but his earnest, sincere prayers tend to bring him so in harmony with God that he knows His will and the more readily accords thereto.

Unless we pray that we be brought into harmony with the will—the laws of God, and yield ourselves to the influences emanating therefrom—that His will be done,—we then suppose Him to be a capricious, a mutable being.

LOVE.

With the thrills and emotions of our human loves we are very well acquainted, but who of us gives consideration to that love which is an essence of the soul-nature, the love that elevates, purifies, soothes and blesses? The love which is the outgrowth of the altogether human, for a while allures and thralls the senses, but lacks the intrinsic values of that love which springs from the soul, for it is but of fungus growth and soon wilts under adverse conditions. That element of our being which only is entitled to the appellation—love, springs from the purest sources;—mental regard, heart devotion; the subtler admiration of the spirit part of us; and is lasting and progressive.

Nothing emanating from our attributes is of a soiling character when prompted by *this* love.

The babe's love for its mother, innate, indigenous, absolute! is the purest, truest, sweetest of all emotions or swayings; and endures amidst

the divergencies of after-years vicissitudes. It typifies the sacredness of this feeling as it should always be with us, the yearning for, the faith in, the yielding to, the devotion of—all that is of us, that is noblest, truest, purest—best.

Love, in this highest sense, is an evidence of the divine nature in us, and is the power for holiness; linking us to the source of Being; drawing down from the heavens those influences which light up the dark places and sweeten the acrid emanations of our wilfull and crude human natures.

This soul-love is the delineation marking the boundaries between the lower nature and that partaking of the angelic. And as we have it from its lowest form to its highest best, are we graded in this life, from the entirely human up to the God-likenessed. The human love *per se*, is but a face of man under a mask of the divine, the unattractive in itself garbed in the temporary habiliments of the beautiful; and like all that is not intrinsic, sometime or other it is discovered to be a seductive counterfeit. But this soul-love endures, elevates, ennobles under all conditions and at all and for all times; wins,

holds, and delights all who are brought within the sphere of its charms.

Suavity may be taken as the outward evidence of kindliness of disposition, but unless pure love is its basis, a love that loves to love for pure love's sake, it will be but as the dull, uncertain flaming of the flambeau in comparison with the constant effulgence given forth by the sun.

After infancy but few of us are able to realize this highest, truest affection, because of our discordant human emotions. In our adult-age we perceive it nebulously, in the far-off expanse of our introspections; and have some conception of its perfecting character, of its sublimable power; our grosser natures, our more selfish-selves dominating, so that we cannot lift ourselves out of the slough of our emotions to the Pisgah heights where the fulness of love that is true and pure, may be known. 'He that feareth is not made perfect in love,' the Scripture teaches us, and we realize that doubting and fearing takes from us the human love that we accept as the perfect love, replacing it with distrust; and all that was in us of yielding, shrinks away and antagonizes, so that that we named

love, is no more. But true love, such as is defined by Christ, worketh no ill, endures and increases as we approach the end of life.

This true love is so difficult of attainment by poor humanity, the spurious has worked itself into dominance because of the desire for that which we think may soothe and be a solace; and even though we realize our lack of the higher love, and the desirableness of it, yet not even feeble or desultory efforts are made to acquire the genuine, so that we may be nearer to, and made partakers of, that happiness which we realize must flow from real soul affection.

The fact that this pure love is of the infant life, and that its influence is perceptible through the after years, may we not have the comforting assurance that in God's providence He ordains for us a state where this love will have its fruition, if we but keep it alive by that faith which will insure us eternal life—true love of God, and confessing Christ before men.

TRUST—HOPE.

Alone ! O God ! 'tis now I feel
The chilling influence of the world's rude blast.
Its cold burthen is settling o'er
My withered hopes, like snow on faded flow-
ers.

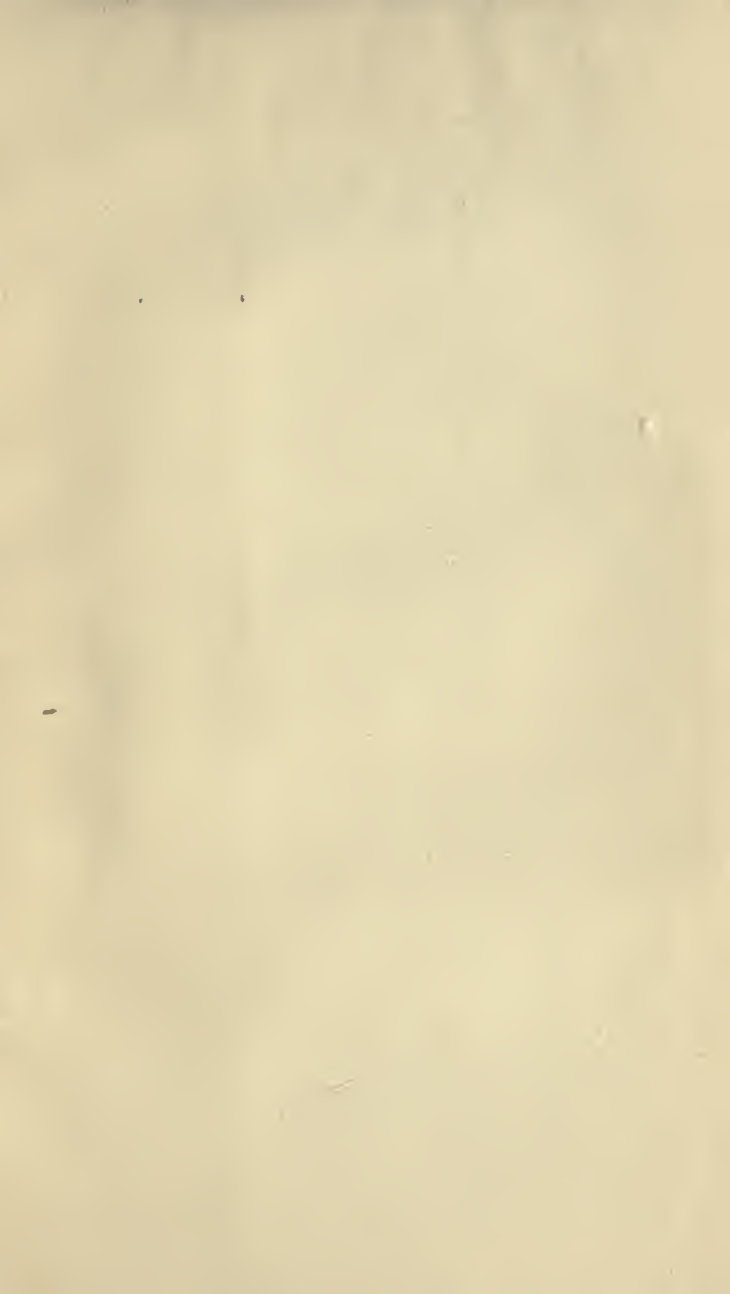
The rosy tints of the summer
Sky, that once o'erhung my path and diffused
their

Dazzling radiance over greater
Faults than mine, have vanished, and the
murky clouds

Of winter shut out the very
Light of Heaven from my anxious gaze. Plenty
And Ease have both departed, and
Penury mocks my utter desolation.

The luxuriant home's exchanged
For a lowly cot ; the soft couch for the straw
Pallet ; rich viands for the coarse
Food of the poor : summer friends forsake me,
and

The un pitying world passes
Me by, with scarcely a word of sympathy.
Death robs me of the dear ties that
Bound me to this earth, and leaves me in fearful
Misery. Covetousness and fraud
Extort the last penny, and I am doomed to
Wander about this world alone!
The sweet anticipation of better days
Are forever abandoned. Faith
A delusion! Love, the shadow
Of prosperity, hath glided away, like
The sun that goes down in the West.
Alone? Mistaken fancy. No not alone!
E'en if forsaken by the world,
God will never forsake His trusting creatures.
Though my path through life be hedged with
Thorns, I'll not repine, but preserve a holy
And undying trust in Heaven!



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